

## Specialty Cheese—Another Record High

In 2007, Wisconsin maintained its position as the nation's top cheese producing state and continued to lead the way with expanded production of a wide variety of specialty cheeses. Wisconsin specialty cheese production showed a 3 percent increase from the previous year, setting a new record. At 399 million pounds, specialty cheese accounted for 16 percent of the state's total cheese production.

Of the 124 state cheese plants, 83 manufactured at least one type of specialty cheese during 2007, up 3 plants from the previous year. Feta, with a 9 percent increase in production, was the state's most popular specialty cheese. Asiago, Blue, Hispanic types, Parmesan Wheel, and specialty Provolone cheeses were other popular varieties.

Wisconsin cheese makers are known for offering a wide variety of high quality specialty cheeses. A specialty cheese is a value-added product which commands a premium price. According to the Wisconsin Specialty Cheese Institute, the nature of specialty cheese is derived from one or more unique qualities, such as exotic origin, particular processing or design, limited supply, unusual application or use, and extraordinary packaging or channel of sale. The common denominator is its very high quality.

## SPECIALTY CHEESE PRODUCTION Wisconsin, 2006 and 2007

Type	No. of plants	2006 Production	No. of plants	2007 Production
		1,000 lbs.		1,000 lbs.
Asiago	10	25,341	9	23,447
Cheddar 1/	29	19,920	28	17,947
Farmers	16	2,070	12	2,125
Feta	9	58,713	8	63,731
Italian Fontina	8	3,451	10	3,617
Hispanic	19	47,003	18	49,906
Limburger	1	833	1	744
Parmesan Wheel	8	44,160	8	40,221
Provolone 2/	5	46,983	5	46,064
Romano Wheel	8	9,918	8	9,338
All Other 3/	46	128,152	50	142,272
Total 4/	80	386,544	83	399,412

1/ Includes only specialty types of this variety. 2/ Includes Provolone aged > 60 days and other specialty Provolone. 3/ Combined to avoid disclosure of individual plant data. Includes: American Grana, Auribella, Bel Pease, Blue, Brie, Camembert, Butterkase, specialty Colby, Edam, Fior di Latte, Fontiago, Fontinella, Gorgonzola, Gouda, Gruyere, Havarti, Italico, Juustoleipa, Kreme Kaese, Les Freres, Mascarpone, Middle Eastern cheeses, specialty Monterey Jack, Morning Sun, specialty Mozzarella, other specialty Parmesan, Pepato, Peperon, Raclette, St. Otho, Semi-soft European, low-fat Swiss, specialty Swiss, Swedish style Fontina, and Yogurt cheese. 4/Total cheese plants producing one or more specialty cheeses. Source: USDA, NASS, WI FO